

**Governor's Commission to Review and Advise on Services
Related to At-Risk Youth in New Hampshire
July 10, 2015
Rooms 206-208 Legislative Office Building**

DRAFT MINUTES

Commission Members in Attendance: Geoffrey Souther, Michael Skibbie, Mike Adamkowski, Nicole Rodler, Martha Kane, Superintendent David Dionne, and Judge James Carroll

Commission Members Absent: Mary Steady, Evelyn Clark-Smith, Debra DeSimone, Representative Betsey McKinney, Karen Purse, and Commissioner Nick Toumpas,

Others in Attendance: Amy Kennedy, Governor's Office, Sherri Levesque, DCYF Bureau Administrator, Caroline Gargas, Chair of the Children and Family Committee, Barbara Carpenter, Keryn Bernard-Kriegl from the NH Children's Trust.

I. **Call to Order:**

Chair Souther called the meeting to order at 11:05 am by welcoming the members.

II. **Approval of Minutes:**

Chair Souther asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 15, 2015 meeting. Commissioner Dionne moved to accept the draft minutes and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Adamkowski. Motion was adopted. The minutes will be reposted on the website as final draft.

III. **Presentation: Review of New Hampshire Juvenile Justice System by Edward J. Loughran, Executive Director, Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators**

Ned Loughran presented to the group his Review of New Hampshire Juvenile Justice (NH JJ) System. The review had four objectives: to compare the organizational structure and management of juvenile justice services in NH to the best practices of these services nationally, practice and programming in NH JJ field services, the safety and security of youth, family, and staff in NH JJ, and the planning for the return of seventeen year-old youth from the adult corrections system to NH JJ.

The methods for gathering information for this report was site visits at the Sununu Center, Concord JJ District Office, Webster House, and Easter Seals, along with interviews of various staff, and reviews of various laws.

Commissioner Skibbie asked if anything came out in the review regarding differences in services for males and females. Ned stated that no, he hadn't come across anything regarding those differences at Sununu, as programming there is very thorough.

Commissioner Skibbie explained that the group is trying to understand what the target should be in terms of array of services, and asked if Ned had any advice for the Commission on how to describe the target spectrum or places along spectrum where we need service availability? He also asked if there were any sources of expertise Ned

could suggest. Ned suggested speaking with the community based providers such as Webster House and Easter Seals, as they work with kids in the community. Commissioner Skibbie then asked how the group can assess whether there are gaps in the spectrum, in which case there wouldn't be experts. Ned suggested looking at a random number of cases of case workers and discusses where roadblocks are in each particular case.

The extremely high rate of recidivism among those children released from the Sununu Center on parole was discussed, and Ned explained that to expect kids from the backgrounds they have to go back to their home environment and not have issues is unrealistic. Children are still subject to impulsivity and influence from peers, and we should be less surprised at some incidences of recidivism and should aim more for incremental improvement. Ned does not believe this is an issue of them not being kept long enough at the Sununu Center.

Judge Carrol discussed that since the amount of services available has diminished, we are trying more often to fit the child to the service, which is contrary to what we should be doing. There is also a cultural problem dealing with young people; for example, when a child comes out of the Sununu Center and into high school, people know where they were and that can have a stigma attached to it.

Commissioner Skibbie discussed a phenomenon that occurs when there is an effective program for a particular kind of child and gaps to either side of the program where what happens is the inappropriate kids get put into those programs which diminishes the effectiveness of the program itself. This is a destructive dynamic, and people typically err on the side of more restrictive instead of less.

Commissioner Skibbie mentioned that the report makes note that the policy at the Sununu Center prohibits seclusion, and asked if this was being adhered to. Ned responded that it is his understanding that it is being adhered to, and it is only used to get a child under control, but not used as punishment.

Commissioner Adamkowski requested resources for the kids no one has the ability to serve. It is hard to meet the needs of all because the needs are so diverse. Ned suggested looking into Wraparound Milwaukee as they have a central database and their agencies pool their funds to craft a comprehensive program and keep kids in the community. Commissioner Rodler mentioned that Manchester adapted their database from the Milwaukee model, but it costs money.

Ned feels we need a solid continuum so children aren't under or over served. He suggests that if this Commission does one thing, it is look at the array of services for those kids that are now not coming into the deep end of the system but were a while ago. Make sure rural communities aren't deprived. He suggests looking at North Dakota, as they have a similar configuration as NH. We should establish a continuum model through the state so the right services are available for the kids and families.

IV. Commission recommendations to execute Executive Order 2014-8 duties.

V. Next Steps and Proposed Agenda for future meetings:

The Commissioner of DHHS, Nick Toumpas, is unable to attend these Commission meetings due to the meeting time. The group decided to change the meeting time to 12:30-2:30, from now on.

This Commission is required to meet six times during the first year, and four times a year after that. Commissioner Souther asked the group how often they wanted to meet from now on. Commissioner Skibbie suggested meeting in August and then taking a short break after that. He feels that one thing the group is missing is a presentation from Lorraine Bartlett, the Director of DCYF, on what she sees as their most significant challenges. Commissioner Souther will invite her to the next meeting. Commissioner Souther also invites the group to send him ideas and suggestions of what they'd like to look at.

VI. Other Business:

Barbara Carpenter, member of the juvenile parole board, asked to present at a later commission meeting.

VII. Adjournment:

Chair Souther moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Skibbie seconded. The motion was adopted and the meeting was adjourned at 12:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily A. Larson
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